

Space Policy Guidelines (excluding Centrally Timetabled Teaching Rooms)

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This document was developed by the Space Policy Consultation Group and was approved by the Executive Operations Group on 20th October 2014 and the Executive Team on 3rd November 2014.

The objective of the policy is to support and enable the Aston 2020 mission:

“To be the UK’s leading University for business and the professions, where original research, enterprise and inspiring teaching deliver global impact.”

1.0 Introduction

The University’s estate is an important and expensive resource vital in supporting Aston’s learning, teaching and research growth ambitions. Rising student expectations and a growing staff and student population all need to be accommodated whilst maintaining an environmentally and financially sustainable estate.

The University has devised a master development plan to deliver the estate required to support and accommodate these ambitions and to continue the regeneration of the campus. This involves targeted investment to redevelop key office and academic areas to improve the efficiency of the building layout thus enabling growth to be accommodated within existing space. These developments will also purposely improve the overall working environment and will provide the good quality spaces that are expected of a modern University.

This Policy defines a framework by which space will be allocated to enable the delivery of the master development plan together with the facilities and accommodation required to support our growth mission. The University will endeavour to make appropriate space available based on need to allow staff and students to conduct teaching, learning and research activities well whilst acknowledging the constraints that are upon us.

This framework is based upon:

- 1) Understanding and agreement on requirement needs through consultation prior to any redevelopments commencing.
- 2) Sharing of design iterations, based on policy standards, to meet requirement needs whilst taking into consideration constraints such as budget, available space, existing building geometry and timescale.
- 3) Final design sign-off based on agreed requirements, consultations and relevant professional design standards within agreed timescales.
- 4) Delivery of appropriate agreed space in line with project budget, timelines and quality standards.
- 5) A post-occupancy evaluation review, which will be carried out six months after occupation to highlight elements that have gone well and areas for improvement in future projects.

2.0 Space Change Process

2.1) Consultation

- a) **Department-led changes;** requests for expansion, reconfigurations etc. shall be submitted to the space planning team where they shall be assessed, in conjunction with the requestor, against this framework to ensure that the proposal matches the master plan, is not carried out in isolation and is viable.

- b) University-led changes; prior to any proposed change or project being implemented a member of the Estates team or external associate will lead a consultation to discuss the implications. This consultation shall involve meeting with those affected and undertaking a role analysis and, dependent upon the size/nature of the project, a group needs analysis to help determine requirements.

2.2) Assessing Space Requirements

- a) Office space; the following table outlines the baseline for office space allocation, extra space may only be allocated if there is a clear need arising from agreed job requirements. To maintain predictability of office sizing and design, any extra provision shall be provided locally and externally to any individual office e.g. additional local storage or meeting areas.
- b) Shared space; part time staff (academic and non-academic), visitors, sessionals, postgraduate research students and emeritus staff shall be allocated shared space or shared hot-desk facilities when working less than 0.6FTE. Hours of work on campus and job requirements will be taken into account when allocating space.
- c) Meeting space; the provision of local meeting spaces will usually be determined by the results of a 'time utilisation survey'. This involves the observed usage of current spaces at regular intervals usually over one week at an agreed and appropriate point in time. Current spaces including staff offices, meeting rooms and other meeting areas will be included in the survey, dependent upon the project, in order to capture both planned and unplanned meeting activity. Dependent upon requirements meeting facilities provided may be bookable or non-bookable, in the form of meeting pods or rooms.
- d) Support space; the provision of support spaces will usually be determined by a 'time utilisation survey' as above. Existing spaces such as kitchens, break out spaces, common rooms etc. will be included in the survey to help define the requirement.
- e) Generic Teaching and Tutorial Spaces; these spaces will be provided centrally and shall be timetabled during the annual timetabling process. The University's 'Teaching Space Model' shall be used to calculate the number of rooms required using current school timetabling data. See separate 'Teaching Space Development' document.
- f) Specialist Teaching/Research Spaces; these spaces will be assessed and planned on an individual basis. The method shall depend upon the project and may be a 'time utilisation survey', scaled plans, income benchmarks, sector subject norms, or the 'teaching space model'.

Office Space Summary Table

Note; an element of inefficiency may be imposed by the building geometry and it is expected that a sensible allowance (+/-) be made where appropriate.

Staff/Student (Full Time Only)	Individual Cellular Office	Multi-Occupancy Office (Shared or Open Plan) *
University Executive Team	15 m ² (this may be split into smaller office with adjacent meeting room that can be used by others when not in use.)	15 m ² (which may be split into open plan desk/working space and separate meeting room.)
Academic/Teaching Staff	8-10.5 m ² dependent upon location and building geometry	6 m ² per person ** (by agreement with the School, department or subject group involved or where space is limited)
Professional and Administrative Staff / Visiting Academics	By exception where appropriate; 8-10.5 m ² as above	6 m ² per person
Research Only Staff (non-lab based) / Technician (non-workshop based)	-	6 m ² per person
Research Staff also using Laboratory Space / Technician also using workshop space	-	4 m ² per person for a dedicated desk or 6 m ² per desk for shared desks
Postgraduate Research Students / Sessional (dependent upon hours worked)	-	4 m ² per person for an individual desk or 4 m ² per desk for 'drop in' or shared desk facilities where space is limited)

Write-up Or Drop in Areas Primarily Lab Based Researchers / 'Transient' Staff / Sessional (dependent upon hours worked)	-	2.5 m ² per dedicated desk or 2.7 m ² per shared desk with lockers (minimum desk size for both).
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* The area specified allows for circulation, access to workstations and general storage.

** Plus additional shared breakout/support spaces.

2.3) Layout Design Process

Members of the Estates team or an external architect will work with staff or a small working group to design and develop furniture/room layout options. The previous needs/role analysis and agreed space requirements will inform this design including locations of staff who may require more privacy or have well-being considerations. Other considerations shall be disabled access, storage solutions, location of lighting/services and any necessary ventilation. Location and proximity to kitchen/cooking and toilet facilities will be considered during larger redevelopments.

3.0 General Principles of Space Allocation

- 3.1 The Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992 have been considered in these guidelines and all norms outlined for office based staff/students exceed the minimum stipulated. Best practice has been established for the allocation of space within write-up/drop in areas for use by non-office based staff/students etc.; this includes an agreed minimum desk size/working area and appropriate storage facilities.
- 3.2 All space is owned by the University and shall be administered centrally by the Space Planning Team within Estates & Capital Developments (overseen by the Executive Director of Capital Development) in accordance with this framework.
- 3.3 All space, new and existing, shall be allocated according to the standards set in this document when affected by refurbishments, moves or projects irrespective of who initiated the change.
- 3.4 Space shall be allocated on clear needs rather than space that may be available or desired.
- 3.5 Schools/Departments cannot legitimately retain space that remains vacant or that is being ineffectively used if there is another need for that space.
- 3.6 Where practicable Schools and Departments will be expected to share space where common functions and synergies exist, i.e. teaching labs, research labs, meeting and social spaces etc. to reduce duplication of activity.
- 3.7 Only one desk or work area shall be allocated per person. If staff are required to work in more than one area or department then shared hot desk facilities will be arranged locally.
- 3.8 Postgraduate masters students shall use central or departmental learning/study areas and shall not normally be allocated dedicated workstations or drop in facilities.
- 3.9 Due to the nature of the University's properties it will not be possible to provide an external window for every person, however appropriate steps will be taken to provide adequate lighting, ventilation and temperature range in accordance with Building Regulations.
- 3.10 The University will seek to improve efficiency within all properties by reducing excess circulation space and non-usable areas wherever possible.
- 3.11 Store rooms or ancillary functions shall be located in windowless areas and not within spaces which could be used as office or teaching space. Archives or storage not accessed daily shall be located in an appropriate space on the lower ground floor or basement of the Main Building or an equivalent area in other properties.
- 3.12 The University shall endeavour to locate departments and research groups together where practicable.

4.0 Appeal Process

Individuals or groups who wish to appeal decisions on the allocation of space must do so in writing to the Executive Director of Capital Development who will arrange for the appeal to be heard by an independently selected panel. A case review may also be undertaken, if necessary, by the Executive Operations Group.

Appendix 1 - Aston Space Standards Compared to Other Institutions.

Institution	Academic	Non-Academic	Shared Office/ Open Plan
Aston University	8-10.5m² individual office (15m² for Exec Team) or 6m² shared	6m² shared	6m²
Buckinghamshire New University	12m ² individual office for Deans/PVC 7.5m ² in a shared office (from 6-50 occupants) for other academics inc. Profs	7.5m ²	7.5m ²
City University	9m ²	9m ²	8m ²
Coventry University	7.8m ²	7.8m ²	
University of East Anglia			6m ² per desk plus 4 m ² for support space
Imperial College	10m ²	10m ²	5m ² to 7.5m ²
Kings College London	10 -12m ² Single Occupancy		
University of Leeds	12m ² Single Occupancy	Multi-Occupancy	
University of Leicester	9m ² to 12m ²		5m ² to 8m ²
University of Lincoln	9m ² Profs without staff 15 m ² Profs with staff (although 9-15m ² is the acceptable range)		
University of Liverpool	7m ² single occupancy 12m ² multi occupancy	7m ² single occupancy 12m ² multi occupancy	
London Metropolitan University	8-10m ² for all staff, inc. support spaces. Some academics in open plan.	8-10m ² for all staff, inc. support spaces. Open plan	8-10m ² for all staff, inc. support spaces.
London School of Economics	9-12m ² individual office for full time academics 13.5-15m ² individual office for full time Profs 8m ² offices are in place in some recent developments	4-6m ²	4-6m ²
Uni. of Manchester	7m ² to 15m ² Single Occupancy	7m ² to 15m ²	
University of Nottingham	9 -18m ² (Grade 5+ Single Occupancy)	9m ² – 13m ² (Grade 5+ Single Occupancy)	
Oxford Brookes	5.42m ² per fte lowest level 9.2 m ² per fte target 12.62m ² per fte highest level	5.42m ² per fte lowest 9.2 m ² per fte target 12.62m ² per fte highest	4.52m ² per fte lowest 7.52m ² per fte target 10.52m ² per fte highest
University of Salford	11m ² maximum shared space for all except VC/DVC	11m ² maximum shared	11m ² maximum
University of Sheffield	10m ² for all offices 16m ² for HOD's	7m ² open plan	7m ² open plan
Sheffield Hallam Uni.	6.5m ² to 7.5m ²	6.5m ² to 7.5m ²	
Strathclyde University	9m ²	9m ²	7m ²
Swansea University	13m ² Senior Lecturer 11m ² Lecturer	8m ²	8m ²
University College Dublin	11m ²		
University of Warwick	12m ² – 14m ² Single Occupancy	Multi-Occupancy	
Sector Space Range from Above	Offices – 7m ² to 18m ² Shared – 5.42m ² to 12m ²	4m ² to 15m ² (offices and shared areas)	4m ² to 11m ²
HEFCE Space Management Group 'starting point'	Office inc. meeting space - 15m ² Standard office - 9m ² Shared – 7.5m ²	Office inc. meeting - 15m ² Standard office - 9m ² Shared – 7.5m ²	Shared – 7.5m ²
British Council for Offices	UK wide research shows that the average workplace density is 10.9m ² NIA, with the public sector being 12.1m ² NIA. NIA includes support spaces etc. and is therefore not directly comparable to the standards above. Aston will develop an equivalent measure.		